

REMARKS

This Amendment is fully responsive to the non-final Office Action dated April 22, 2208, issued in connection with the above-identified application. A petition for a one-month extension of time accompanies this Amendment. Claims 1-37 were previously pending in the present application. With this Amendment, claims 1-15, 17-22, 24-26 and 28-37 have been amended; and claims 16, 23 and 27 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer to the subject matter therein. Accordingly, claims 1-15, 17-22, 24-26 and 28-37 are all the claims pending in the present application. No new matter has been introduced by the amendments made to the claims. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 1, 2, 7-9, 13-19, 23, 26 and 32-37 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Long (U.S. Publication No. 2002/0007310, hereafter “Long”). Claims 16 and 23 have been canceled rendering the above rejections to those claims moot. Additionally, the Applicants have amended independent claims 1, 7, 17 and 32-37 to help further distinguish the present invention from the cited prior art. For example, claim 1 (as amended) recites the following features:

“[a]n information distribution system for distributing information from an information provider to a user, comprising:

an information distribution device for distributing commodity information that serves as an advertisement for a commodity;

a communication terminal for receiving the commodity information, and outputting the received commodity information to a memory card,

the memory card being portable and mounted on said communication terminal, wherein the memory card is provided to the user at a cost borne at least partly by the information provider, and includes:

a storage unit having a storage area for commodity information;

a judging unit operable to judge whether the received commodity information was issued from the information provider that bears the cost of the memory card at least partly; and

a writing unit operable, only if the judgment is affirmative, to write the received commodity information to the commodity information storage area for a purpose of displaying to the user.” (Emphasis added).

The features emphasized above in claim 1 are similarly recited in independent claims 7, 17 and 32-37 (as amended). Additionally, the features emphasized above are fully supported by the Applicants' disclosure (e.g., Fig. 2 and pgs. 17-21).

The present invention, as recited in claims 1, 7, 17 and 32-37, is directed to an information distribution system for distributing information from an information provider to a user, which includes the use of a memory card. The memory card is portable and mounted on a communication terminal and is provided to the user at a cost borne at least partly by the information provider. The memory card includes a judging unit operable to judge whether the received commodity information was issued from the information provider that bears the cost of the memory card at least partly; and a writing unit operable, only if the judgment is affirmative, to write the received commodity information to the commodity information storage area for a purpose of displaying to the user.

Based on the above features of the present invention, the commodity information serving as the advertisement is transmitted to a number of users, which achieves an advertising effect. In addition, since the information provider bears the cost of the memory cards partly or entirely, the users are provided with a memory card at no or low cost. In addition, commodity information is written into the commodity information storage area of the memory card only on the condition that the commodity information is issued by the information provider that bears the cost of the memory card. To that end, the capacity of the memory card being used to store advertisement information issued by information providers not bearing any cost of the memory card and thus not contributing toward the widespread use of memory cards is prevented.

In the Office Action, the Examiner relies on Long for disclosing or suggesting all the features noted above in independent claims 1, 7, 17 and 32-37.

Long discloses a video information display business system that includes an information appliance. As described in Long, the information appliance 300 includes a non-volatile advertising storage device 310, and an advertising display area 202 for displaying advertisements, wherein the advertising display area 202 is configured to continuously display the stored advertisements.

In Long, the arrow segments 412, 402 represent delivery of the advertising material 422 by the advertiser 414 to the information appliance via the manufacturer 410. The information

appliance manufacturer 410 loads the advertising material 442 from the advertiser 414, as depicted by the arrow segments 412, 402. The advertising information 448 can flow from the advertiser 414 to the software developer 418 electronically, and the manufacturer 410 can incorporate the first set of advertising material 422 into the information appliance (see e.g., ¶[0103], ¶[0106], ¶[0112], ¶[0116] and ¶[0118]).

As noted above, Long discloses a technique of supplying advertising material to an information appliance where the supplied advertising material is stored in the advertising display area for displaying. However, Long lacks any disclosure related to claimed features of the judging unit and writing unit, as similarly recited in claims 1, 7, 17 and 32-37.

Thus, Long clearly falls short of the present invention for at least the reasons noted below. In Long, the advertising information is stored to the storage device regardless of whether the advertiser bears the cost of the storage device. To that end, there is a risk that the capacity of the storage device is used to store advertising information of advertisers not bearing any cost of the storage device and thus not contributing toward the widespread use of memory cards.

On the other hand, in the present invention (as similarly recited in claims 1, 7, 17 and 32-37) the users are provided with memory cards at no or low cost. Further, by virtue of the features of the judging unit and the writing unit, the capacity of the memory card being used to store advertisement information issued by information providers not bearing any cost of the memory card and thus not contributing toward the widespread use of memory cards is prevented.

Based on the above discussion, independent claims 1, 7, 17 and 32-37 are not anticipated or rendered obvious by Long. Likewise, claims 2, 8, 9, 13-15, 18 and 19 are not anticipated or rendered obvious at least by virtue of their respective dependencies from independent claims 1, 7, and 17.

With regard to claims 26, the Applicants have also amended the claim to help further distinguish the present invention from the cited prior art. As amended, claim 26 recites the following features:

“[a]n information distribution device for distributing information issued from an information provider to a user, comprising:

a transmitting unit operable to transmit, via a communication terminal, commodity information issued from the information provider to a memory card that is provided to the user,

wherein

the information distribution device generates, when receiving write-indicated information from the memory card, an electronic ticket having a monetary value based on the received write-indicated information, the write-indicate information indicating that the memory card has written the commodity information, and

said transmitting unit securely transmits the electronic ticket to the memory card via the communication terminal.” (Emphasis added).

The features emphasized above in claim 26 are fully supported by the Applicants’ disclosure (see e.g., Fig. 3 and pgs. 9-12).

The present invention, as recited in claim 26, is directed to an information distribution device for distributing information issued from an information provider to a user. The present invention is distinguishable from the cited prior art in that upon receipt of write-indicate information indicating that the commodity information has been written to the memory card, the information distribution device generates an electronic ticket having a monetary value based on the received write-indicate information. Thus, the user is encouraged to retrieve commodity information for the purpose of issuing write-indicate information to later receive an electronic ticket.

In the Office Action, the Examiner also relies on Long for disclosing or suggesting the features recited in claim 26.

However, as noted above Long, at best, discloses that coupon information is automatically sent to the portable electronic device and that the coupon information is stored in local memory. Long fails to disclose any component that generates an electronic ticket based on the received write-indicate information. Thus, using the system in Long, it is not possible to generate an electronic ticket based on the received coupon information, so as to encourage the user to retrieve commodity information. On the other hand, according to the present invention (as recited in claim 26) an electronic ticket having a monetary value is generated based on the received write-indicate information, which encourages the user to retrieve commodity information.

Based on the above discussion, independent claim 26 is not anticipated or rendered obvious by Long.

In the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 30 and 31 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Hung (U.S. Patent No. 7,257,545, hereafter Hung). The Applicants have amended independent claim 30 to help further distinguish the present invention from the cited prior art. As amended, claim 30 recites the following features:

“[a] payment settlement device for settling a payment on a commodity, comprising:
a storage unit operable to prestore a first provider ID that identifies an information provider that issues coupon information showing a discount to be made on the commodity;
a receiving unit operable to receive via a communication terminal from a memory card used by the user, coupon information including a second provider ID that identifies an information provider that issued the received coupon information;
a judging unit operable to judge whether the second provider ID matches the first provider ID; and
a discount unit operable to make a discount shown by the received coupon information only if the first and second provider IDs match.” (Emphasis added.)

The features emphasized above in claim 30 are fully supported by the Applicants’ disclosure (see e.g., Fig. 7 and pgs. 21-23).

The present invention, as recited in claim 30, is directed to a payment settlement device for settling a payment on a commodity such that a judging unit is operable to judge whether the second provider ID matches the first provider ID. Additionally, a discount unit is operable to perform a discount shown by the received coupon information only if the first and second provider IDs match. Thus, the payment settlement device is enabled to confirm the validity of the coupon information without requiring communications with the coupon issuer.

In the Office Action, the Examiner relies on Hung for disclosing or suggesting all the features recited in claim 30.

Hung discloses a scannable coupon, such as a bar code, that is generated on a configurable display of a portable electronic device. As described in Hung, a manufacturer of a product provides a coupon with a product package for a discount on the next purchase of the same or a different product. The coupon information can be automatically sent to the portable electronic device; and the coupon information is stored in local memory and used to generate the scannable display. Hung also discloses the use of a coupon settlement device. More

particularly, Hung discloses that the POS queries the issuer to verify that the coupon is valid (see e.g., col. 6, lines 25-36).

However, Hung fails to disclose the claimed judging unit and the discount unit of claim 30. In addition, the process of verifying the coupon according to Hung requires communication with the coupon issuer. On the other hand, the payment settlement device according to the claim 30 is capable of verifying the coupon information without the need to communicate with the coupon issuer.

Based on the above discussion, independent claim 30 is not anticipated or rendered obvious by Hung. Likewise, claim 31 is not anticipated or rendered obvious by Hung at least by virtue of its dependency from independent claim 30.

In the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 3, 4, 11, 25 and 27-29 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Long in view of Hung.

With regard to claim 25, the Applicants have amended the claim to help further distinguish the present invention from the cited prior art. As amended claim 25 recites the following features:

“[a] memory card for storing information distributed from a specific information provider to a user, the memory card being portable and mounted on a communication terminal and provided to the user at a cost borne at least partly by the specific information provider, comprising:

a storage unit having a storage area for commodity information issued from the information provider, and a storage area for an electronic ticket having a monetary value;

a first transmitting-receiving unit operable to receive a first provider ID identifying the specific information provider from the information distribution device via the communication terminal;

a first writing unit operable to write the received first provider ID to the commodity information storage area;

a second transmitting-receiving unit operable to receive from the information distribution device via the communication terminal, commodity information that includes a second provider ID identifying information provider that issued commodity information to be received;

a judging unit operable to judge whether the second provider ID matches the first

provider ID that identifies the specific information provider bearing the cost of the memory card at least partly;

a second writing unit operable, only if the first and second provider IDs match, to receive the commodity information and write the received commodity information to the commodity information storage area for a purpose of displaying to the user;

a third transmitting-receiving unit operable to transmit to the information distribution device via the communication terminal, write-indicate information indicating that the commodity information has been written, and securely receive an electronic ticket generated by the information distribution device for a monetary value based on the write-indicate information; and

a third writing unit operable to write the received electronic ticket to the storage unit.”
(Emphasis added).

The features emphasized above in claim 25 are fully supported by the Applicants’ disclosure (e.g., Fig. 2 and pgs. 17-21).

The present invention, as recited in claim 25, is similar to that described above in claim 1. That is, as amended, claim 25 is directed to providing users with memory cards at no or low cost. By virtue of the features of the claimed judging unit and the writing unit, the capacity of the memory card being used to store advertisement information issued by information providers not bearing any cost of the memory card and thus not contributing toward the widespread use of memory cards is prevented.

As noted above, Long fails to disclose or suggest this feature. Additionally, Hung fails to overcome the deficiencies noted above in Long.

Hung discloses a scannable coupon, such as a bar code, that is generated on a configurable display of a portable electronic device. As described in Hung, a manufacturer of a product might provide a coupon with a product package for a discount on the next purchase of the same or a different product. The coupon information can be automatically sent to the portable electronic device; and the coupon information is stored in local memory and used to generate the scannable display.

Also, as described in Hung, a signal contains information used to generate a computer-readable coupon on a display of the device, and can contain other information such as an

expiration date, issuer identification, offer code, serialized identification numbers, value codes and user information. Alternatively, the coupon can be transmitted or re-transmitted to the user in a local format. Coupon information from a coupon issuer is encrypted at a server and sent to a handheld device using a wireless modem or similar technology; and can be saved in a local memory and recalled before being generated on the display (see e.g., col. 1, lines 29-31; col. 2, lines 66-67; col. 3, lines 3-4 and lines 43-49; col. 4, lines 3-5; and col. 6, lines 1-4 and lines 17-19).

Similar to Long, Hung fails to disclose or suggest any disclosure related to the claimed features of the judging unit and writing unit, as recited in claim 25. Thus, Hung suffers from the same deficiencies noted above in Long. That is, the advertising information is stored to the storage device regardless whether the advertiser bears the cost of the storage device. To that end, there is a risk that the capacity of the storage device is used to store advertising information of advertisers not bearing any cost of the storage device and thus not contributing toward the widespread use of memory cards.

On the other hand, the present invention (as recited in claim 25) the users are provided with memory cards at no or low cost. Further, by virtue of the features of the judging unit and the writing unit, the capacity of the memory card being used to store advertisement information issued by information providers not bearing any cost of the memory card and thus not contributing toward the widespread use of memory cards is prevented.

Accordingly, no combination of Long and Hung would result in, or otherwise render obvious, claim 25.

With regard to claims 3, 4, 11 and 27-29, claims 3 and 4 depend (indirectly) from independent claim 1; claim 11 depends (indirectly) from independent claim 7; and claims 28 and 29 depend (either directly or indirectly) from independent claim 26. Additionally, claim 27 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer to the subject matter therein. Accordingly, the above rejection with respect to that claim is moot.

As noted above, Long fails disclose or suggest the features recited in claims 1 and 7. And, Hung fails to disclose or suggest the features recited in claim 26 and fails to overcome the deficiencies noted above in Long. Accordingly, no combination of Long and Hung would result in, or otherwise render obvious, claims 3, 4, 11, 28 and 29 at least by virtue of their respective

dependencies from independent claims 1, 7 and 26.

In the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 5, 6, 12, and 24 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Long in view of Coffin (U.S. Publication No. 2003/0172376, hereafter “Coffin”).

With regard to claim 24, the Applicants have amended the claim to help further distinguish the present invention from the cited prior art. As amended, claim 24 recites the following features:

“[a] memory card for storing information transmitted from an information provider to a user, the memory card being portable and mounted on a communication terminal, wherein

- the memory card is provided to the user based on a lease in return for regular payments of a lease fee to the information provider,
- the memory card comprising:
 - a storage unit having a storage area for commodity information issued from the information provider, and a storage area for an electronic ticket having a monetary value;
 - a first transmitting-receiving unit operable to receive a first provider ID identifying the information provider from the information distribution device via the communication terminal;
 - a first writing unit operable to write the received first provider ID to the commodity information storage area;
 - a second transmitting-receiving unit operable to securely transmit, on a regular basis, an electronic ticket having a monetary value equivalent to the lease fee to the information distribution device via the communication terminal;
 - a third transmitting-receiving unit operable to receive from the information distribution device, commodity information that includes a second provider ID identifying an information provider of the commodity information;
 - a judging unit operable to judge whether the second provider ID matches the first provider ID that identifies the specific information provider bearing the cost of the memory card at least partly;
 - a second writing unit operable to write, only if the first and second provider IDs match, the received commodity information to the commodity information storage area for a purpose of displaying to the user;

a fourth transmitting-receiving unit operable to reduce the lease fee by a predetermined amount when the commodity information is written, and securely transmit to the information distribution device via the communication terminal, an electronic ticket having a monetary value equivalent to the post-reduction lease fee; and

a third writing unit operable to deducts the transmitted monetary value from the electronic ticket stored in the storage unit.” (Emphasis added).

The features noted above in claim 24 are fully supported by the Applicants’ disclosure (see e.g., Fig. 2 and pgs. 17-21).

The present invention, as recited in claim 24, is similar to that described above in claim 1. That is, as amended, claim 24 is directed to providing users with memory cards at no or low cost. By virtue of the features of the claimed judging unit and the writing unit, the capacity of the memory card being used to store advertisement information issued by information providers not bearing any cost of the memory card and thus not contributing toward the widespread use of memory cards is prevented.

In the Office Action, the Examiner relies on the combination of Long and Coffin for disclosing or suggesting all the features of claim 24.

As noted above, Long discloses a technique of supplying advertising material to an information appliance where the supplied advertising material is stored in the advertising display area to display the stored advertising material. Long lacks any disclosure related to the claimed features of the judging unit and writing unit, as similarly recited in claim 24.

Additionally, after a detailed review of Coffin, the reference fails to overcome the deficiencies noted above in Long.

Coffin discloses a system and method for displaying broadcast programming and generating points for viewing advertising content selected by a viewer. More specifically, the viewer defines one or more categories of advertising to be displayed. Coffin, however, fails to disclose or suggest the feature of the judging unit and the writing unit, as recited in claim 24.

Accordingly, no combination of Long and Coffin would result in, or otherwise render obvious, claim 24.

With regard to claims 5, 6 and 12, claims 5 and 6 depend (indirectly) from independent claim 1; and claim 12 depends (indirectly) from independent claim 7.

As noted above, Long fails to overcome the deficiencies noted above in independent claims 1 and 7. Additionally, after a detailed review of Coffin, the reference fails to overcome the deficiencies noted above in Long. Accordingly, no combination of Long and Coffin would result in, or otherwise render obvious, claims 5, 6 and 12 at least by virtue of their respective dependencies from independent claims 1 and 7.

In the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 10 and 20-22 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Long in view of Krishan et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,442,529, hereafter "Krishan").

Claim 10 depends (indirectly) from independent claim 1; and claims 20-22 depend (indirectly) from independent claim 17.

As noted above, Long fails to overcome the deficiencies noted above in independent claims 1 and 17. Additionally, after a detailed review of Krishan, the reference fails to overcome the deficiencies noted above in Long. Accordingly, no combination of Long and Krishan would result in, or otherwise render obvious, claims 10 and 20-22 at least by virtue of their respective dependencies from independent claims 1 and 17.

In light of the above, the Applicants respectfully submit that all the pending claims are patentable over the prior art of record. The Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejections presented in the Office Action dated April 22, 2008, and pass the present application to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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